

I would like to do today, she says, is to give you a little background on what it was like growing up in that environment, my experience with a pregnancy during my teen years and how this legislation would affect women in similar situations. My father was an alcoholic who was frequently intensely angry, threatening and physically violent. Expressions of affection in my family were virtually nonexistent. We were physically punished for failing to meet our father's standards although he never told us what those standards were. The threat of physical punishment was always present. My parents did not talk to me about personal relationships, sex, reproduction, contraception. My situation is not an isolated one. I have several friends in rural Nebraska, although we never spoke in depth about what was happening in our homes, we tended to stay together, knowing each other reinforced our concept of the lives that we were living were typical and normal, just the way things were supposed to be. I had left home at the age of 18 determined to distance myself from my family. When I was 19, I was forced to return home. Shortly after returning, I found that I was pregnant. My feeling at that time was one of total panic. There was no way I could turn to my parents for support. My father had drawn a knife...

PRESIDENT: One minute.

SENATOR LANDIS: ...and threatened to kill the man that I had been involved with when he forced me to return home, and at that time, did not know that I was pregnant. I had no way of knowing what his reaction would be if I told him and if he knew I was pregnant. I was terrified of his anger. I was terrified of the very real threat of physical violence. I don't know if the members of this committee can understand the feelings of terror someone experiences in that kind of a situation. Abortion was illegal at that time and the only person that I knew of who could perform abortions in that area was a sleazy man who lived on the outskirts of Kearney. I ran away from home. I contacted social services. I lived in a group home. I carried my baby to term and I gave him up for adoption. The State of Nebraska subsidized my existence during that time. During those seven months, my life was a living hell.

PRESIDENT: Time.

SENATOR LANDIS: May I continue then, Mr. Speaker, under my own time then.